

## Taking the Reins . . . Leaders are Master Communicators

The most effective leaders are master communicators. This is evident in their clear, logical speech, their open and direct conversation, their compelling arguments, and their sharing of information. Let's talk about this last item for a moment.



Leaders share information freely. They understand that people need information to do their jobs effectively and efficiently. Some people feel they need to keep what they know to themselves, that this will give them more power and influence. This simply isn't true. Freely sharing information, good and bad, helps unify the team. Everyone knows what's going on and what needs to be done. People will be more willing and able to formulate ideas and work together on solutions. You'll all be working toward common goals, not at cross purposes.

Master communicators also communicate through actions and attitudes. You might think it's a cliché, but it's true... actions speak louder than words. When a leader says something, and then acts on those words, that leader is sending a powerful message about his/her own character and commitment to the team and the organization.

As well, master communicators are interested in what others think. They solicit opinions from others at all levels in an organization. They encourage open discussion and are willing to listen to other view points. They are quick with a word of praise or congratulations when things are going well, and with encouragement or reassurance when things are rough.

Mark Sanborn, in his book "You Don't Need a Title to be a Leader", writes this concise list of how leaders communicate. How does your communication measure up?

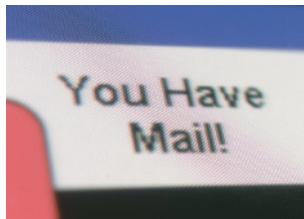
- ◆ Others tell—leaders sell.
- ◆ Others impress—leaders influence.
- ◆ Others try to be heard—leaders try to be understood.
- ◆ Others explain—leaders energize.
- ◆ Others listen—leaders hear what is being said.
- ◆ Others inform—leaders inspire.
- ◆ Others give facts—leaders tell stories.

## One Less E-mail to Read (and to Write)

One way to show appreciation for an e-mail someone sent is to reply with a thank you. Sometimes, though, you know that person is really busy and doesn't need another e-mail to open and read. Do you just not express thanks for the help you were given or the information you received? That doesn't seem right, either. Here's a quick way to convey your thanks while not making the recipient open another email.

Just reply to the last email you received and append "Thanks" at the end of the subject. Then send it on its way. That way, the recipient will know you received the email and that you appreciated it, and they don't have to open the email to find out.

This saves a bit of time for everyone involved.



## Employee Rewards

Allowing people to choose their own training can be a powerful reward. It shows you are interested in helping people further their career goals.

Perhaps a clerk would like to increase his/her knowledge and skill with Microsoft Office programs so he/she can get a Microsoft Office Specialist certification. Providing training on these applications will help this one reach personal career goals and make him/her more efficient at work. Everyone wins.

Allowing people to learn in the way that's best for them is important, too. There are live workshops/classes, online classes, and reading and doing tutorials individually on the computer. Give the choice.

By allowing people to choose their training, you are showing your appreciation for and commitment to your people.

## Quotes

"Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing."—*Rollo May*

"When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen."—*Ernest Hemingway*

"Communication is the real work of leadership."—*Nitin Nohria*

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